

SECTION THREE – NEEDS ASSESSMENT

This section describes the needs assessment portion of the Recreation Plan development process and essential findings from each tool. The purpose of the needs assessment was to identify recreation needs within the community and to suggest the relative priority of each identified need.

3.1 Community Inputs

The needs assessment tools used to collect public input and background information for the development of the Plan included: Community Workshops; Stakeholder Interviews; Program Participant Surveys; Community Group Surveys; Focus Groups; Staff Workshops; and a Trends Analysis. For a complete report on the findings for each activity, please see the Appendix.

A. Community Workshop No. 1 – June 7, 2006

At the first Community Workshop, participants identified the most important "Community Characteristics/ Attributes" as:

- Places to gather, trails, open space, downtown;
- Family-friendly community; and
- Safe and secure.

RECREATION PLAN COMMUNITY WORKSHOP JUNE 7, 2006 CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW



WELCOME!
THANK YOU FOR
COMING - DAVID HUELA



COMMUNITY ATTRIBUTES

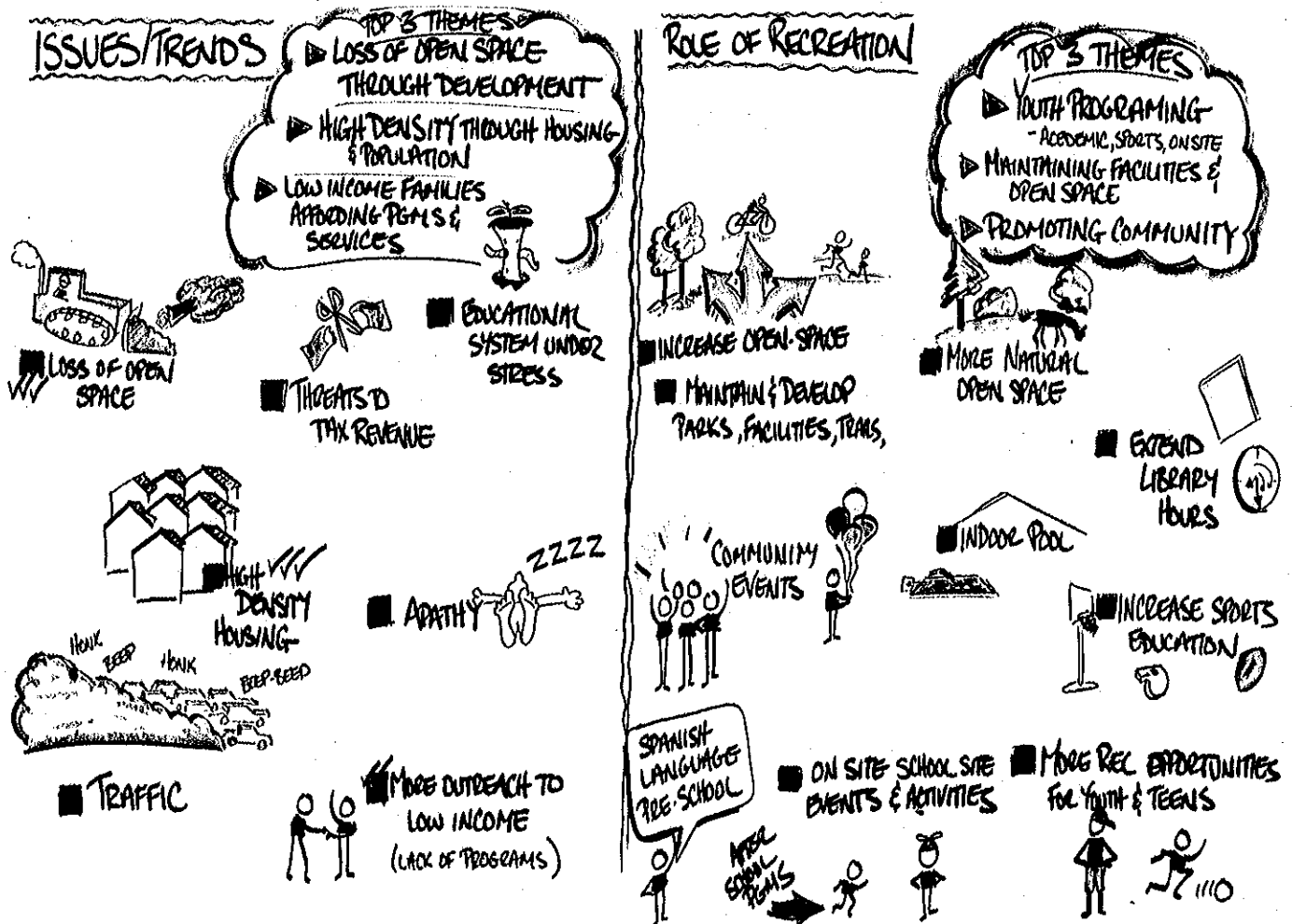
TOP 3 THEMES

- PLACES TO GATHER
 - TRAILS, TRAILS, OPEN SPACE, DOWNTOWN, LIBRARY
- FAMILY FRIENDLY COMMUNITY
- SAFE & SECURE



The "issues or trends" noted by participants that may negatively impact the identified Community Characteristics/Attributes were:

- Loss of open space through development;
- High density through housing and population;
- Low-income families affording or accessing programs and services.



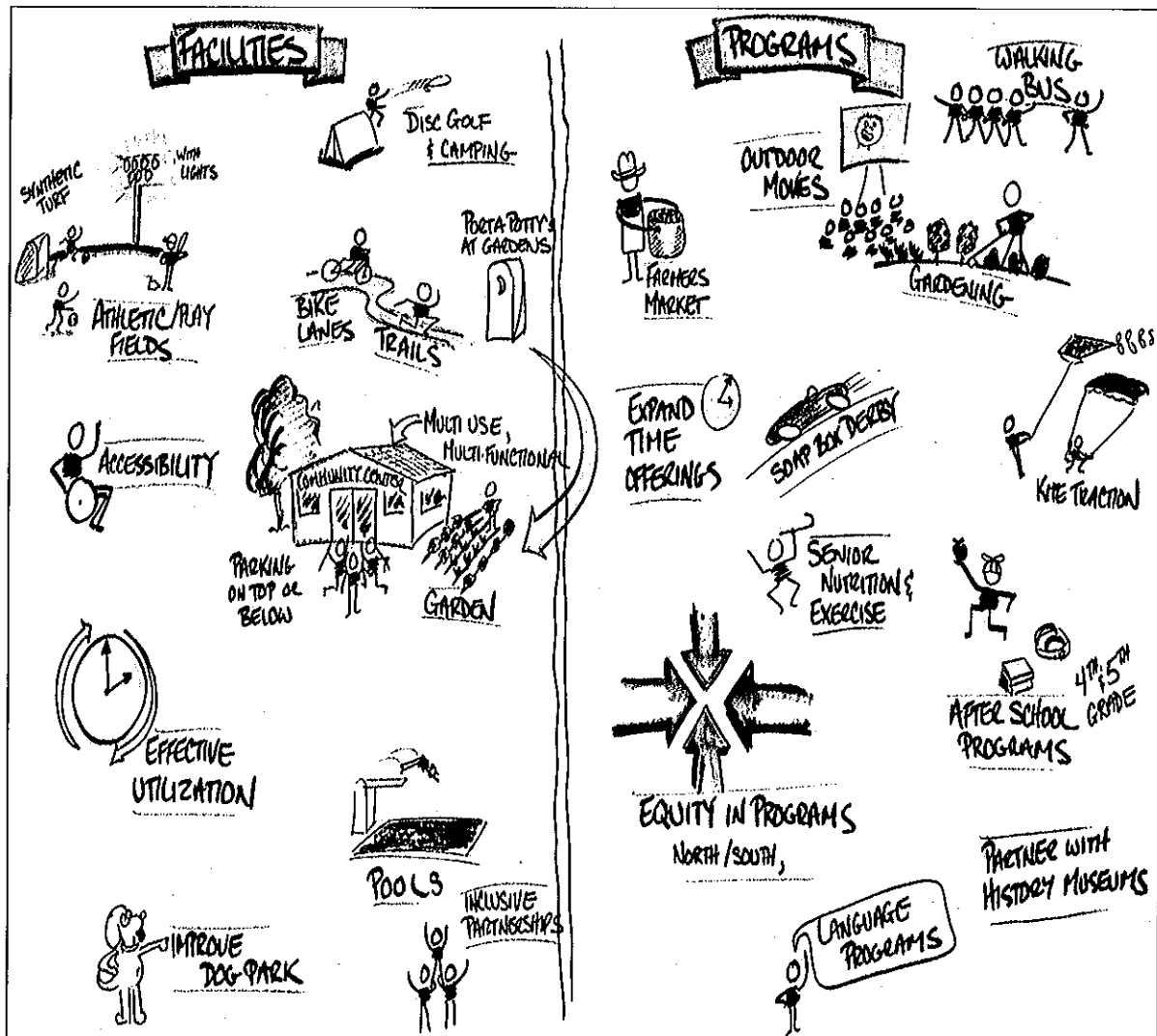
The "role of Recreation" thought to most support the Community Characteristics and mitigate issues was seen as:

- Maintain existing facilities and open space;
- Provide youth programming at school sites;
- Promote community that is accessible for all.

B. Community Workshop No. 2—September 27, 2006

At the second Community Workshop, participants discussed their views of *"what are the most important recreation programs and facilities that would best support the Mountain View Community and why."* The three areas discussed were open space, facilities and programs. A summary of the findings is given below.

- **Open Space**—Participants identified the need for maintaining existing open space with an emphasis on restoring plant life and improving the maintenance of trees. It was also determined that trails are needed, including new trails and extending existing trails. Cuesta Annex was also discussed with various positions that included keeping it as it is, planting more trees as well as utilizing the space for athletic fields.
- **Facilities**—Open space was a high priority for the workshop participants as well as more designated athletic fields so as to maintain existing sensitive open spaces. It was suggested that developer in-lieu fees be used to acquire neighborhood parks and open space. Dog parks, community center, sports complex, trails, athletic fields and general maintenance issues were also discussed.
- **Programs/Activities**—Environmental programs were an important consideration for the workshop participants. These activities included nature walks, bike rides on trails, educational programs in natural spaces as well as art programs in open space. Youth and senior programs received a high degree of discussion with an emphasis on health and wellness and youth development programming. In the delivery of programs, services and facilities, participants spoke to the need for increased awareness of programs through promotion and marketing.



C. Stakeholder Interviews—June 7 and June 8, 2006

The stakeholder interviews provided a forum for direct and candid dialogue about what role the Recreation Plan will play in supporting the community by mitigating issues and supporting residents' quality of life. Interviewees were selected based on their interest in parks and community recreation as well as their insight and/or knowledge about the community concerning parks, recreation and community services. A total of thirty-one (31) stakeholders were interviewed and are listed in the Appendix. The stakeholders discussed six areas as summarized below.

- **Community Characteristics**—Community characteristics can be defined as the social aspects of a community that make it a desirable

place to live, work and/or play. Stakeholders identified Mountain View as a community with a small-town atmosphere where people are friendly. Mountain View was viewed as a safe place to raise family with progressive politics and a friendly government. Diversity is highly valued. Interviewees underscored Mountain View as a clean place with beautiful spaces and architecture. Mountain View has a great downtown, good trails, neighborhood parks and great performing arts. These characteristics are a result of the engaged citizenry, collaboration and a good municipal government.

- **Issues Impacting Key Characteristics** – Stakeholders considered a growing population with higher density of building as an important issue and threat that could negatively impact the Mountain View community. Open space is being threatened as well as access due to various constraints on residents. Housing is becoming unaffordable for many. There is a growing population of unsupervised kids and gangs. There is also a growing population of transients. There should be more things for youth and teens to do in places where they feel safe to "hang out." The population is becoming gentrified. People are working harder and are more stressed.
- **Role of Parks, Recreation and Community Services** – Stakeholders cited the need to promote the strong sense of community experienced in Mountain View. Increased publicity of what is available and how to access it was also identified. Staff was encouraged to: increase youth programs and involve youth with the identification of those programs; continue to maintain what is already in place and look at innovative ways to provide services in the future; increase the walkability of the City, including neighborhood parks and places that are connected with the trails for walking and biking; and strengthen existing relationships with community partners and build new ones.
- **Recreation Plan Goals** – Stakeholders wanted the Recreation Plan to continue to identify opportunities to increase green/open space for the community. They wanted it to evaluate and assess programs and services to ensure they met the needs of the community. The Plan should maintain and strengthen what is already in place as well as develop relationships and partnerships to expand services and facilities, while ensuring access for all.
- **Most Important Program** – Youth and families seem to be two target groups that could be served by a variety of programs. Community

events, environmental programs and activities that connect people were also identified as important programs.

- **Most Important Facility** – A community center, athletic facilities and youth facilities were identified most often.

D. Program Participant Surveys – Summer/Fall 2006

The participant survey provided participants who are the direct recipients of programs and services or users of community facilities to voice their opinion. The survey was mailed to over 1,300 participants of City of Mountain View recreation classes, included in the fall 2006 Recreation Activity Guide, and printed in the August 4, 2006 edition of the *Mountain View Voice*. Two hundred fifty-one (251) surveys were returned. A complete report of the responses is found in the Appendix. Survey responses most often mentioned are included below according to the six survey topics:

- **Community Characteristics** – The characteristics listed by survey respondents to distinguish Mountain View were: parks; the variety of recreational programs/activities; library; quality of recreational programs; affordable and well priced programs; concerts/entertainment/festivals; pool facilities and swim programs; community feeling; relaxing and safe environment; schools, after-school programs, and classes.
- **Changes Needed to Meet Recreation Needs** – Survey respondents identified: increased recreation programs and expanded recreation schedule; increased number of parks, fields and make park improvements; preservation of open space; extend swim hours.
- **Community Issues or Challenges** – Survey respondents identified: affordable housing/housing issues; population growth/space for programs; traffic issues/transit; maintain open space; effective school system/improve public schools; create additional parks/expand existing parks; affordability of area/income/wealth gap/programs; additional athletic facilities.
- **Programs/Services Outcomes and Benefits** – Survey respondents identified the benefits as: educational/learning; socialization/friends; affordable; exercise/physical activity; community building; safety; outdoor activity; health; fun; qualified staff/programs.

- **Needed Program**—Survey respondents identified: more teen activities/locations/after-school programs; more adult classes.
- **Needed Facility**—Survey respondents identified: indoor pool/slide/"lazy river"; more sports fields; new gym for weights/gymnastics/courts.

E. **Community Group Surveys**

As part of the community input process, a survey was distributed to forty-nine (49) nonprofit, educational and community service organizations. The following community groups responded to the survey: Los Altos-Mountain View Pony Baseball; St. Joseph's School; St. Athanasius Catholic Church; Yew-Chung International School; Shoreline Community Church; West Valley Dog Training Club; Friends of Deer Hollow Farm; Friends of Stevens Creek Trail; and Huff School. The survey respondents provided information in seven areas: community characteristics; changes needed to meet recreation needs; community issues or challenges, community strategies that can help to meet the challenges; items needed in the Plan; the outcomes and benefits to be associated with recreation programs, services and facilities; and the most important recreation programs and facilities to be added.

F. **Focus Groups—February 27, February 28, and March 1, 2007**

The purpose of the focus group process was to review and refine key themes or goals for the Recreation Plan based on the information gathered in the workshops, stakeholder interviews, community questionnaire, and surveys in four areas: program and facility delivery outcomes; program and service needs; facility needs; and administrative considerations. Six (6) groups of participants were recruited from the community based on their level of interest, insight and/or knowledge about the community concerning parks, recreation and community services as well as to represent a diversity of experiences, variety of interests and ethnic and cultural diversity. A list of focus group participants is found in Appendix A. The focus group members were invited to review/reflect on those responses that received the highest priority during the initial public input phase in the four areas below.

- **Desirable Programs/Services Outcomes**—Benefits or outcomes are what people seek when participating in recreation activities. The focus

group members emphasized "sense of community" and that the highest-priority responses in the Prioritization Matrix (i.e., Access for All, Open Space, Safety and Security, Expanding Community Resources/Capacity, Lifelong Learning, Walkable Community) should be what defines "community." There was a concern that health and wellness did not have a higher priority. Access continued to be a highly valued community attribute as well as cultural diversity, open space and the environment.

- **Programs and Services**— The programs and services are those activities that are recreational in nature. Youth programs, environmental education, sports, family services and access were high priorities for the focus group members. In general, participants agreed with the priorities illustrated on the Prioritization Matrix (i.e., after-school programs; hiking, biking, walking; school site programs; academic/homework assistance; community language classes; downtown events/activities; environmental education; stress reduction programs; volunteer activities; youth activities; and youth and adult sports) but see a need for more emphasis on health and wellness-oriented activities.
- **Facilities and Amenities**— Facilities included those that are recreational only such as parks, athletic facilities, trails, open space and meeting/gathering places. Focus group members agreed with the Prioritization Matrix relative to facility needs (i.e., Open Space, Park Amenities, Recreation Center, Sports Fields, Trails). Additional considerations included emphasis on a community center, sports facilities, open space, natural spaces, access to school sites, neighborhood spaces, increased collaboration with potential partners to expand spaces for the community, and youth facilities.
- **Administrative Considerations**— The administrative considerations are those activities that support access and the participant's experience with the program, facility or service. Collaboration and access continued to be a major theme of those participating. High priorities in addition to the Prioritization Matrix (i.e., neighborhood programs/satellite/outreach; expand school collaboration; increased access for low income; increase partnerships) included: highly trained and knowledgeable staff; utilization of school sites; involving the community in planning; youth development programs; and neighborhood services. Increased collaboration and partnerships should be a high priority in the delivery of services.

G. Staff Workshops

The Recreation Division staff participated in two (2) workshops to gain their perspectives on what Mountain View residents have in the way of recreational options. Staff also refined the results and discussed action steps that would assist in addressing the needs through programs and services.

H. Trends Analysis

The trends analysis provides for a review and consideration of the myriad of shifts and changes within society and the world that ultimately make a difference in how people choose to use their free time and what may be driving these choices in their daily lives.